

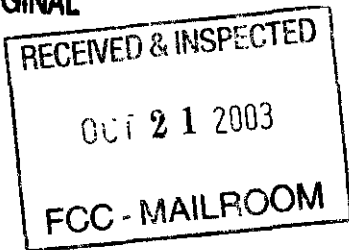


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Avada™

Audiology & Hearing Care

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October 6, 2003

Marlene H Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Room TW-A325
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street SW
Washington DC 20554

Dear Ms Dortch

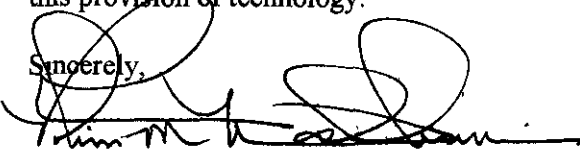
I am a professional member of SHHH and a licensed hearing healthcare clinician in the state of Ohio at Avada Audiology and Hearing Care (Springfield). Soon after I came to Avada I realized the multiplicity of the issues surrounding hearing loss and so began a master's program in independent studies at Antioch University McGregor in counseling (issues of hearing loss and Deaf culture). Consequently, I also have begun working in the Mental Health and Deafness Program at Wright State University (Ellis Human Development Institute) to better understand the population with whom we work.

I mention this here because I want to address the recent technology trial of the CapTel phone by deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals over the state of Ohio. In the last few years I have become more and more aware of the need to expand the medical model of hearing loss and deafness to incorporate a more holistic approach to the care of these individuals. Certainly, one of the most expedient requirements for assisting those with lessened hearing is to improve communication across the board for those with hearing loss and those who are in communication with them.

How wonderful that this technology is potentially available for citizens in Ohio! I recognize that this means auxiliary training for the Ohio Relay employees, additional software, and comprehensive decisions about allocations of funds, etc. But how positive for Ohio citizens who are deaf and hard-of-hearing! I can see nothing more beneficial to these populations and to the enhancement of education to the general public.

Thank you for taking the time to read my views. I appreciate everything that you can do to assist people whose communication needs will be advanced so much by this provision of technology.

Sincerely,


Robin M Washburn, MA candidate
Office Manager, License # 2633

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